Synopsis

Eco-feminism in the Select Novels of Toni Morrison and Anita Desai

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Indroduction

The world of women and the natural environment has been the central part of the ecofeminism. It is also called ecological feminism. It's a branch of feminism that examines the connections between women and nature. Its name 'ecofeminism' was coined by French feminist Francoise d'Eaubonne in 1974. In her book *Le Feminism ou la Mort* meaning, feminism or death (1974). Ecological feminism or ecofeminism was emerged from the environmentalist and feminist movement in 1970s.

Ecofeminism as a movement, it was developed from various movements like peace movements, labour movements, animal liberation movement and environmental movement. One of the environmentalists such as Greta Gaard explains ecofeminism as ecofeminism is the ideology which authorizes oppression based on race, class, gender and physical abilities. In 1973, the Bishnoi Community started the movement to save the trees in the Himalayan forests. In the Indian context, the name of environmental scholar and activist, Vandana Shiva is considered at the various perspectives. She is a philosopher and activist of environmental studies both at national and international level. She advocates against the present patriarchal society and focuses on women's improvement at every stage. She believes that ecological destruction and industrial consequences threaten daily life. Similarly, women's world and nature's world are euqally endangered by the society. The works by ecofeminists like Susan Griffin (1976), Mary Daly (1978), Carolyn Merchant (1980), Ynestra King (1981) and Karan Warren (1987, 1990) assert that the fundamental function of nature and woman is to reproduce and nurture to the living species.

In the process of reproduction, both women and nature have to undergo through the exploitation. The ecofeminists endeavour to show the similar exploitation of both nature and women. They are very much concerned to patriarchy and environmental crisis. The American philosopher, Karen J. Warren, writes in her article, *Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections* tries to point out the environmental degradation and recognises the connections between women and nature. Simone de Beauvoir in her famous work *The Second Sex* (1974), says that man exploites her, born in her and dies in her. The relationship between women and nature is closely interconnected with each other. Both women and nature constitue human life better. One should, therefore, maintain the equilibrium between women and nature.

This necessity of ecofeminism and its application in the today's climate changed world becomes more significant for the better lives of flora and fauna. The weather affected situation obstacles today's work and stops tomorrow's progress. It is generally observed that women work in the farms, raise the children and nurture them affectionately. Most of their perceptions are attached to the natural world. Both nature and women have the same process of good breeding but both the nature and women are equally exploited by the society. The scientific development is necessary but there should not be problematic situation for living beings and nature. Therefore, the present study of ecofeminism tries to focus and discuss in detail on the dually exploitation of nature and women.

Life and Works of Toni Morrison and Anita Desai.

Toni Morrison (1931-2019)

Toni Morrison was born in a working black family. She was known earlier with 'Chloe Ardelia Wofford Morrison'. At the age of twelve, she was baptized and got her name 'Anthony' but she became popular with her nickname 'Toni'. She was born and raised in Lorain, Ohio. She completed her graduation with BA English in 1953 from Howard University and two years after M.A. from Conrell University in 1955. Her first novel *The Bluest Eye* published in 1970. Then novel *Song of solomon 1977* brought her national attention and won the National Critic Book Circle Award. Morrison won the Pulitzer Prize in 1988 and in 1993, she was awarded Nobel Prize for literature. Her literary works include as below: *The Bluest Eye (1970), Sula (1973), Song of Solomon (1977), Beloved (1987), Home (2012), Jazz (1992), Paradise (1998), Love (2003) A Mercy (2008), God Help the Child (2015).* She wrote children's books, short fictions, plays, poetry, Libretto, articles and non-fiction etc. she developed her reputation as an author in the 1970s and 80s. In the late 1960s, Morrison became the first black female editor in fiction at Random House in New York City. Her work *Beloved* was made into film in 1998. Morrison's works are praised for addressing the harsh consequences of racism in the United States and black American experience.

Anita Desai (b.1937)

Anita Mazumdar is an Indian novelist. She is an important writer in Indian writing in English. She was shortlisted for the Booker Prize three times. She received

Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978 for her novel, *Fire on the Mountain.* She won the British Guardian Prize for her novel, *The Village by the Sea (1982).* She published her first novel, *Cry, the Peacock 1963*. Her literary work, *Clear Light of Day (1980),* is the most autobiographical novel set during her coming of age. Her novel, *In Custody,* published in 1984, was listed for The Booker Prize. She became a creative writing teacher at Massachusetts' Institute of Technology in 1993. Her novel *Fasting Feasting (1993)* increased popularity by setting in the final list of The Bookar Prize. Anita Desi's literary works include as below:

Cry, the Peacock (1963), Voices in the City (1965), Bye Bye Blackbird (1971), The Peacock Garden (1974), Where Shall We Go This Summer? (1975), Cat on a Houseboat (1976), Fire on Mountain (1977), Games at Twilight (1978), Clear Light of Day (1980), The Village by the Sea (1982), In Custody (1984), Baumgartner's Bombay (1988), Journey to Ithaca (1995), Schalar and Gypsy (1996), Fasting Feasting (1999), Diamond, Dust and Other Stories (2000), The Zigzag Way (2004), The Artist of Disappearance (2011)

Review of Literature

Ahlawat, Abhinav, *Eco-Feminist Study of Toni Morrison's Novels : The Bluest Eye, Sula and Beloved.* Mandsaur M.P. India, International Journal of Humanities and Social Invention, ISSN (online) : 2319-70 222, (print) : 2319-7714, Volume 2, Issue 8, August 2013, P.56-68

The present paper aims at the study of ecofeminist approach in Toni Morrison's novels. It is based on the study of three novels _ *The Bluest Eye, Sula* and *Beloved.* It shows how both women and nature are related with each other in the sense of pain, birth and exploitation in the patriarchal society.

Shiva, Vandana. *Staying Alive Women, Ecology and survival in India.* New Delhi : Women Unlimited Publication, December, 2009.

The book suggest that there are three related conference of development Ecology and gender. It argues that there is an intimate link between the degradation of women and nature in the contemporary society.

Emara, Maha Abdel Moneim. Anita Desi's Firre on the Mountain An Ecofeminist Reading. Washington D.C. Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal _ Vol.4, No.2, January 25 2017.

The present research paper deals with ecofeminism as a social, political and philosophical movement. It focuses on the oppression of women and exploitation of nature as interconnected phenomena. This paper analyzes Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain (1977)* in the light of ecofeminist critical theories.

Kumar, Pranesh R. and Bindhu V.S. *An Ecofeminist Outlook in the Selected Works of Anita Desai.* New Delhi : Article in Man in India, 97 (10) : 11-14 January, 2017. The terms ecology and ecocriticism have gained much attention from literary critics. They have the close bond between nature and man textualized by the men of letters in their works. The relationship between living organisms and physical environment is reflected in literature through ecocriticism. An unwritten bond keeps men connected with nature even in the digital era. The ecological concerns in Anita Desai's two novels, Cry, the Peacock and Fire on the Mountain are highlighted in this paper.

Xue, Jain. *A Study of Toni Morrison's Home from the Perspective of Ecofeminism.* United Kingdom : International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social Science, Vol.5, June 2018.

Home is the tenth novel of Toni Morrison-first and so the only one female African American writer has won the Nobel Prize. Through a story of a black brother and sister who run away from home and finally choose to return. Morrison shows her unique interpretation and thinking about racial and female problems. In the light of description and metaphors about nature and female throughout the thesis employs the theory of ecofeminism to analyze the relationship of female and nature.

Velmurugan. R. *Ecofeminism in the Select Novels of Toni Morrison.* (Ph.D. thesis), Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirapalli : Tamil Nadu, September, 2020.

In the above said book, Chapter IInd 'Oppression of Women and Nature in the Bluest Eye' points out the concept of ecofeminism and uses the old age connection between women and nature as a bridge to strengthen both the feminism and the ecological moments which seeks to end oppression of women and nature. The

ecofeminism calls for an end to all oppressions. It connects the exploitation and domination of women with that of the environment and argues that there is connection between women and nature that comes from their shared history of oppression by the patriarchal western society.

Chapter Vth 'Ecofeminism in Beloved' focuses on the fact that ecofeminism is already such highly intersectional ideology. It makes ideal platforms from which women of colour can speak on their race, gender, socioeconomic class and how the environmental issues effect these. A special bond has been formed through mutual suffering at the hands of misogyntistic violence.

Gaard, Greta. *Towards a Queer Ecofeminism,* Hoboken, New Jersey : United States, Wiley on behalf of Hypstia, winter, 1997, Vol.12, No.1 (winter, 1997), p.114-137. Although many ecofeminists acknowledge hedrosexism as a problem, a systematic exploration of the potential intersections of ecofeminism and quuer theories has yet to be made. By interrogating social constructions of the 'natural' the various uses of Christianity as a logic of domination and rhetoric of colonialism, this essay finds those theoretical intersections and argues for the importance of the developing a queer ecofiminism.

Suganthiya, M.A. *A Study of Ecofeminsm in the Select Novels of Anita* Desai. (Ph.D. thesis), Annamalai Nagar : Tamil Nadu, India, December, 2019.

Anita Desai affiliated to the category of women writers who offer their experiences to literature. She is recognised today for her originality and versatility as well as the indigenous favours, she offers in the portrayal of the characters in her fictions. When she was twenty six years old, Desai started her debut novel, '*Cry, the Peacock'.* She admits that in her twenties when she started writing her novel, *Cry, the Peacock,* D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, Henry James had produced the compelling effects on her more strongly. The title of the novel 'Fire on the Moutain' is derived from the Nobel Prize winner William Golding's celebrated novel entitled 'Lord of the Flies', second chapter 'Fire on the Mountain'. Anita Desai describes the human sentiments in juxtaposition with not only their actions but with their environment also as she did in her novel 'Fire on the Mountain'.

Kakoti, Jiban Jyoti. *Negotiating Home and Space in the Novels of Toni Morrison* (Ph.D. thesis), Silchar : Assam University, India 2016.

Home and space are treated as two inter-related concepts in geography, culture and literary studies. Home as geographical concept highlights on inter-relations between spatial references such as space, place and scales on one hand and spatial politics involving identity and power on the other.

Nature of the Problem

The 21st century is undergoing through the adverse effects of climate change both on human lives and flora and fauna. The advancement in sciences and technology has endangered the microorganisms. Trees are being cut down under the name of development but are not being planted in comparison. These environmental issues are showing the negative effects in the human society. Man has under controlled nature at some extents but he is suffering from the ill effects in the society. Therefore, these issues should be discussed at various corners and literature is the one that reaches to the maximum people. It unfolds the awareness of environmental issues among people.

Hypothesis

1. Nature and women are equal exploited by the society.
2. Both women and nature have their own existence.
3. Environmental issues are created due to the ignorance of human beings.
4. The ultimate pleasure lies only in the affinity of nature.
5. Women are succumbed to patriarchal domination.
6. Women have a natural ability to save the world.
7. Women are humiliated on the grounds of race, gender and color.
8. Man is responsible for the imbalance of environment.
9. Human being is not superior to the nature.
10. Necessity is to preserve both nature and environment.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The present research work discusses about the dual world i.e. women's world and nature's world. One has to take care of both visible and invisible worlds. It is

necessary to discuss about the aims and objectives of the present study. It is mentioned as below :

1. To study about the environmental and women's problems.
2. To maintain women's psychological issues.
3. To spread the awareness about environmental crisis.
4. To study about possible solutions to women's and environmental problems.
5. To study about the various causes of environmental imbalance and women's exploitation.
6. To study and analyze the adverse effects of environmental issues on human minds.
7. To make the reconciliation between scientific development and environmental balance.
8. To study the exploitation of women and nature.

Research Methodology

The researcher will follow various methods of research depending on the necessity of the subject. Historical method, qualitative method, interpretative method, analytical method, critical method, comparative method, evaluative method, and descriptive method will be followed. The researcher will follow MLA research method for the present research work.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The researcher proposes to study Toni Morrison's novels _ *The Bluest Eye, Beloved, Home and Sula* and Anita Desai's *Cry, the Pecock, Fire on the Mountain* to make the contribution to the environmental and women's study.

Relevance of the Study

Nature is creator and destroyer. Therefore, the present research work is important on the background of global warming and climate change scenario. The relevance of the present study is universal. Even today, the female's and nature's problems are still prevalent in every nation. Therefore, the problems which are discussed in the literary works of Toni Morrison and Anita Desai contribute to tackle the issues of both women and nature.

The present study provides many specialities for the better understanding about the world around us. It is apt to tackle these burning issues of both environment and women. The climate change and the global warming are affecting badly on agriculture, human society and microorganisms in the environment. Therefore, the present study is much relevant to today's burning issues discussed by the select writers _ Toni Morrison and Anita Desai.

Tentative Chapter Scheme

The first chapter **'Introduction'** will expose about what is ecocriticism and ecofeminism, Indian context to ecofeminism, contribution of Vandana Shiva and father of Indian ecofeminism, Shyam Sundar Paliwal, cultural perspective and ecofeminism, contribution of Indian writers to develop ecofeminism.

The second chapter, **'Representation of Ecofeminism in the Novels to Toni Morrison',** will discuss about ecofeminism with the help of the novels of Toni Morrison as *The Bluest Eye', Home* and *Sula.* Some dialogues, important lines in these novels will be studied in the reference to women's exploitation and environmental issues.

The third chapter **'Representation of Ecofeminism in the Novels of Anita Desai',** will analyse about ecofeminism in the novels such as *Cry, the Peacock* and *Fire on the Mountain',* the researcher will study how these novels expose women's exploitation and environmental issues.

Fourth chapter, **'A Comparative Study of the Novels of Toni Morrison and Anita Desai',** will explain two different ecofeministic perspectives. In this chapter, the researcher will study Toni Morrison's ecofeminism from American ecofeministic perspective and Anita Desai's ecofeminism with Indian culture. The researcher will also make difference between the two different cultural aspects on the basis of ecofeminism.

Fifth chapter, **'Conclusion'** will discuss about what the researcher finds out. The findings about the hypothesis will be studied and the aims and objectives of the present research work will be evaluated minutely.

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